

Message Text

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PAGE 01 VIENNA 09040 231722Z

46

ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY VIENNA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4018

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMCONSUL ZAGREB

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENNA 9040

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, PGOV, AU

SUBJECT: FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS IN SLOVENE MINORITY ISSUE IN
AUSTRIA

REF: VIENNA 8297

1. SUMMARY: MOST RECENT DEVELOPMENTS ON ISSUE INDICATE
FURTHER HARDENING OF IRRECONCILABLE POSITIONS OF MAJOR PARTIES
INVOLVED. YUGOSLAV SOURCE SAID CHANCELLOR KREISKY'S OCT. 14
ORAL RESPONSE TO EARLIER YUGOSLAV DEMARCHE IN BELGRADE
WAS UNSATISFACTORY. ONLY NEW DEVELOPMENT IN KREISKY PRESEN-
TATION WAS VAGUE SUGGESTION, LACKING ANY SPECIFICS, OF
POSSIBILITY OF SUBSUMING SPECIAL CENSUS IN NEXT NATIONWIDE
AUSTRIAN CENSUS. SLOVENE MINORITY LEADERS IN CARINTHIA HAVE
STEPPED UP THEIR PRESSURE ON YUGOSLAVIA TO INTERNATIONALIZE
ISSUE AND THERE SEEMS TO BE SOME EXPECTATION ON AUSTRIAN

SIDE THAT THIS MAY WELL HAPPEN. END SUMMARY.

2. OCT. 16 PROTEST RALLY IN KLAGENFURT OF 700 REPRESENTATIVES
OF SLOVENE MINORITY, ADOPTED RESOLUTION ENDORSING SEPT. 24
DECISION OF SLOVENE MINORITY LEADERS TO SUSPEND FURTHER
TALKS WITH AUSTRIAN FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 VIENNA 09040 231722Z

AND CALLING FOR INTERNATIONALIZATION OF MINORITY ISSUE

AND YUGOSLAV SUPPORT AT "ALL INTERNATIONAL LEVELS".

3. IN OBVIOUS MOVE TO EXPRESS GROWING YUGOSLAV DISSATISFACTION WITH AUSTRIA'S HANDLING OF ISSUE, YUGOSLAV EMBASSY IN VIENNA ON OCT. 10 DISINVITED BURGENLAND PROVINCIAL GOVERNOR KERY FOR OFFICIAL VISIT TO CROATIA SCHEDULED OCT. 14-16. YUGOSLAV EMBASSY SPOKESMAN'S COMMENT ON MOVE WAS THAT CROATIAN GOVERNMENT FELT VISIT AT THIS JUNCTURE WOULD SERVE NO USEFUL PURPOSE BUT CROATIA WOULD LIKE TO HAVE KERY VISIT AT LATER, MORE APPROPRIATE DATE.

4. SOCIALIST GOVERNOR WAGNER OF CARINTHIA USED OCT. 10 CELEBRATION (MARKING 1920 PLEBISCITE IN CARINTHIA), WHICH PASSED WITHOUT INCIDENT, TO PLEAD FOR UNDERSTANDING AND REASONABLENESS ON PART OF ALL PARTIES TO ISSUE AND TO REPEAT HIS OFFER TO SLOVENE MINORITY LEADERS TO CONDUCT DIALOGUE ON MINORITY'S COMPLAINTS.

5. CARINTHIA'S MILITANT NATIONALIST GROUPS, ORGANIZED IN PATRIOTIC FEDERATION (HEIMATDIENST) HELD MASS RALLY, (8000 ATTENDING) IN KLAGENFURT OCT. 13 AT WHICH SLOVENE MINORITY WAS IN EFFECT DENOUNCED AS BEING ALIEN AND TRAITOROUS TO CARINTHIAN INTERESTS AND ADOPTED RESOLUTION CALLING FOR SPECIAL MINORITY CENSUS EVEN IF SLOVENES OPPOSE IT.

6. CHANCELLOR KREISKY, WHO HAS BEEN TRYING, FOR DOMESTIC POLITICAL REASONS, TO MANAGE ISSUE, CALLED IN YUGO AMBASSADOR OCT. 14 TO GIVE HIM WHAT YUGO EMBASSY CONSIDERS TO BE AUSTRIAN RESPONSE TO SEP. 24 YUGO DEMARCHE IN BELGRADE ON ISSUE. ACCORDING TO YUGO EMBASSY SOURCE, WHO ATTENDED MEETING, KREISKY GAVE LENGTHY EXPLANATION OF HIS GOVERNMENT'S GOOD INTENTIONS AND ITS FULL AWARENESS OF ITS TREATY RESPONSIBILITIES BUT ALSO OF MAJOR DOMESTIC DIFFICULTIES BESETTING IT ON ISSUE, IN EFFECT ITS LIMITED SCOPE FOR ACTION. ONLY NEW DEVELOPMENT AT MEETING WAS KREISKY "SUGGESTION" THAT SPECIAL MINORITY CENSUS MIGHT BE SUBSUMED IN A NATIONWIDE CENSUS. NO DATE FOR HEAD COUNT OR DETAILS
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 VIENNA 09040 231722Z

ON PROPOSAL WERE OFFERED HOWEVER.

7. KREISKY MET OCT. 15 WITH LEADERS OF THREE MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES FOR ANOTHER DISCUSSION ON ISSUE AND TO REPORT ON HIS MEETING WITH YUGO AMBASSADOR. FOLLOWING MEETING CARINTHIA GOVERNOR WAGNER SAID FOCUS OF DISCUSSIONS IS NOW ON POSSIBILITY OF HOLDING SPECIAL MINORITY CENSUS IN 1976 OR ON SUBSUMING MINORITY CENSUS

IN NEXT NATIONAL CENSUS IN 1981. IN RESPONSE TO PRESS QUERY, WAGNER STATED HE CONSIDERED IT A POSSIBILITY THAT MEETING OF AMBASSADORS OF SIGNATORY POWERS OF STATE TREATY (US, USSR, UK, FRANCE) WOULD BE CONVENED TO GIVE AUTHORITATIVE INTERPRETATION OF TREATY ON ISSUE (ARTICLE 7). SOMEWHAT SIMILAR APPROACH WAS TAKEN BY SPOKESMAN OF CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE WHO SAID THAT IN VIEW OF MINORITY'S DESIRE TO INTERNATIONALIZE ISSUE, ISSUE COULD POSSIBLY BE SUBMITTED TO UN OR TO CONFERENCE OF SIGNATORY POWERS TO STATE TREATY.

8. COMMENT: MOST RECENT DEVELOPMENTS ON ISSUE SUGGEST A FURTHER HARDENING OF APPARENT IRRECONCILABLE POSITIONS BY MAIN PARTIES INVOLVED, FOR AND AGAINST SPECIAL MINORITY CENSUS. CARINTHIAN NATIONALISM AND DOMESTIC POLITICS HAVE PUSHED SOCIALIST FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO SEEK SAFETY IN NUMBERS, NAMELY LOCK-STEPPING ITS POLICY ON ISSUE WITH THAT OF RIGHT-OF-CENTER POLITICAL PARTIES IN CARINTHIA WHICH IN TURN REFLECT VIEWS OF MILITANT NATIONAL ELEMENTS THERE.

9. KREISKY'S OBSERVATION ON POSSIBILITY OF HOLDING NATIONAL CENSUS TO SUBSUME SPECIAL MINORITY CENSUS IS TANTILIZING GAMBIT CONCERNING WHICH YUGOSLAVS WILL PROBABLY ATTEMPT TO GET EXPLANATION AS TO TIMING AND CONTENT. YUGOSLAVS WOULD PROBABLY REJECT IDEA OF NATIONAL CENSUS IN 1981 AS GUIDE FOR EFFECTING MINORITY RIGHTS BUT EARLIER DATE, POSSIBLY IN 1976, COULD PROVE REASONABLY ACCEPTABLE, PARTICULARLY IF IN INTERIM SERIOUS TALKS WERE HELD ON ISSUE.

10. INDICATIONS ARE THAT YUGOSLAVIA HAS MOVED TO FREEZE ITS RELATIONS WITH AUSTRIA AND THERE SEEMS TO BE
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PAGE 04 VIENNA 09040 231722Z

GROWING AWARENESS ON AUSTRIAN SIDE THAT YUGOSLAVIA MAY WELL CARRY OUT ITS THREAT TO INTERNATIONALIZE ISSUE IF RIGHTS OF SLOVENE MINORITY NOT FULLY EFFECTED WITHIN REASONABLE TIME. POSSIBILITY HAS ALSO INCREASED THAT AUSTRIAN FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, SEEMINGLY UNABLE TO TAKE EFFECTIVE ACTION ON ISSUE, MIGHT, FOR SHORT-TERM POLITICAL ADVANTAGE, THROW ISSUE TO SIGNATORS OF STATE TREATY FOR THEIR INTERPRETATION OF MEANING OF ARTICLE 7. HUMES

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